

Town Government Study Committee 2014

Warren Recreation Building Room 216

June 11, 2014

Committee: Katherine L Babson Jr., Stanley Brooks, Rose Mary Donahue, Arthur J Goldberg, Ann Marie Gross, Richard Page, Linda Perlmutter, Anna Sereiko, Thomas Ulfelder

Also: Peg Metzger, Kathleen Nagle, Michelle Johnson

Chair pro tem Babson called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and requested that each committee member introduce themselves and speak to the reason they were interested in serving on the committee. (Babson introduced Kathy Nagle as administrative assistant to the committee and resource; Michelle Johnson, Babson College MBA student, will also provide assistance to the committee and possibly use the experience for a case study in local governance).

Moderator Peg Metzger then asked for nominations to elect a chair for the committee. Donahue nominated Katherine L. Babson Jr. The nomination was seconded and approved unanimously.

Chair Babson then asked for nominations for vice chair. Babson nominated Rosemary Donahue. The nomination was seconded and elected unanimously.

Chair Babson asked the committee's preference for meeting schedule. It was decided to use the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month as a working calendar.

- K Nagle to find meeting rooms and distribute working calendar.

Kathy Nagle, acting as Town Clerk, swore in the Committee Members to their duty and mentioned the obligations under the Open Meeting Law and the requirements of the Ethics Law.

- Committee members will complete the required training on line and submit completion certificates as soon as possible.

Chair Babson discussed the advisability of televising the meetings of the committee. After a short discussion it was recommended to request taping of the meetings when possible. The committee cited the advantages of transparency, invitation to participate, and public awareness of the work of the committee were outweighed by concerns about sensitive topics for discussion.

- Babson to follow up with James Joyce as to cable's ability to tape.
- Nagle will try to schedule rooms where broadcasting of the meetings will be enabled. (preferred rooms Great Hall, Police Station, Library) (*Great Hall and Library are set up for cable and preferred by Joyce).

Chair Babson invited discussion as to first steps and general approach to the task at hand.

The Committee generally expressed the need for baseline information on the structure and operations of Town Government now.

Nagle to distribute the following documents:

- Town bylaws and Chapter 202 (Town Meeting special act)
- Current Annual Report of activities of Town Boards and Committees
- CAFR (financial report)
- Org chart of boards and committees
- Advisory Committee introductory material for each department (Ann Marie Gross to put together)

Babson and others stated the following activities to be important:

- Listen and understand current structure
- Understand the history of how the current structure was developed (state statutes, bylaws and special acts)
- Develop key questions for the town generally and each board/committee
- Invite participation broadly- invitations to meet with committee; public forums
 - Leadership of committees
 - Executive director
 - Staff department heads
 - Advisory committee – current and recent service, especially chairs
 - General Public
 - Resident satisfaction survey – see 1986 version; online and paper
 - Outreach to groups not currently involved in governance
 - Business community; developers
- Identify what is working for governance and what is not working
- Identify if there is an issue with citizen participation in governance and if there are obstacles to participation
- Investigate duplication of functions to look for opportunities for consolidation
- Understand the position of executive director and other forms of leadership (Town Manager etc)
- Try to get beyond specifics of current issues to look at the governance either supporting or impeding decision making

The Committee discussed briefly operations for access and distribution of information. The Committee requested binders be set up for document that are available as print. Gross suggested the use of a “dropbox” plan for electronic documents.

Babson told committee there are resources from State to explain various governance models.

Babson suggested using a SWOT model to look into questions of current governance model (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat).

Next Meeting 7:30 June 25 at Town Hall – Juliani Meeting Room.

- Babson to invite Hans Larsen and Al Robinson

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.